

# Bard

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# Bard

## BRUMAIRE

Now my favorite month is here  
plates shattering in dark kitchens and  
those wooden skeletons unmasked again  
to let the sky through

The stars are broken dishes, the moon  
a pool of camel piddle, they've gone  
with their learn'd ideas, they trust  
grey roads to nowhere

and leave me king of here. Everything I see  
in her light, colors fade in brightness,  
cold rain wakes up prophecy,  
I act in wood.

They hunt and I find. They bind and I  
forget to run away. It is here,  
isn't it, the clam and the oxygen,  
the sad piano,

clear brittle voices of children, the night  
lost their footsteps and the dog is dead,  
rain rattle, clatter of scepters,  
it is good to live

thoughtful in pale leaflessness  
paper-naked, nothing to remember  
under the intelligent sky, fallen  
leaves full of faces.

Everyone I ever knew.

1 November 1994

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In fine ellipses  
the weather gathered  
against the earth  
this war

this air  
& woke against  
myself the sleep  
dark ruin

what can a road  
be sure of  
not a leg or running  
coins fall

hear them roll  
where is the difference  
I once thought  
worth everything?

1 November 1994



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That there is something waiting in the river  
frightens me because I have never  
been an instrument of dream I wonder  
will anybody pull the curtain  
and look in with that terrible white face

god or devil it doesn't matter it is anybody  
who is seeing and another consciousness awake  
when I must be the only one, I am velvet  
and the dragoman of night. There,  
that's what I meant. The borders

are not barriers. Every glimpse is a gateway  
and the gorgeous flags of every other country  
flicker in the dark. In my eyes is light enough  
for all your seeing. See by dint of me.  
Tell me, what is waiting. What is it

down there you think can see me as I am?

2 November 1994

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Say yes to  
every ordinary  
thing,  
                    buy  
nothing.  
This is enough  
as a rule.

2 November 1994

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At the end I suppose every  
one does reach out for love.  
Which takes away what  
little we thought we knew  
of it, that it was special,  
was silver, was Isolde  
hurrying to her dying lover.  
Whereas it is everyone  
reaching the end of love.  
Which still feels like his fingers.

2 November 1994

## INVARIANT ENERGIES DIVIDE MEEK SUMS

Sunrise in hypertext, a child desires  
something he found in a book—

this is magic,

old bad high lovely Magia,  
to want what we read in a catalogue,  
old Grimoire or Eddie Bauer,  
makes no difference, philately or  
aerobic gear, no difference,  
we want what we read. And it is reading.

Reading restores the immateriality of ideas.  
Reading softens the distance between  
palm tree isles and bussy boulevards.  
Nothing is past the reach of magic

if not the grasp. An idea once propounded  
loses its value —virtue,property—  
in proportion to how many people hear it.  
That is: ideas are matter, and like all the  
matter-world, if you divide something  
there is less of it. You give it and it's gone.

Increasing energy by reading a silent book.  
Increase by reading. Share a cloak  
with a beggar and be heaven, be merit.  
Give: want without wanting. Read what is.  
To read in the shadow of envy.  
To have blessings like a tree.  
To be pure again and cover pages  
with the uncompressed exaltations of kindness towards things,  
things, things.

I measure  
the shadow coming through the branch,  
I am November, nothing matters,  
I can almost understand.

2 November 1994



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It can't be neat, has to be flour or copper polish  
or butter. It should be butter or suet. Spread,  
they're waiting all through the sky, your name  
for the universe. Pervade the Blue Door.

3 November 1994

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This thing you're looking at is my face.  
We share it.  
Air always lives, lies, between us,  
breathing in and out of us,  
trying to make me you.

This poised mask of a thing I give you,  
look at it, it is the ground  
of our bare conversation. Once by the embankment  
we watched the pale Tower  
shimmer in river light by the Roman wall,

Roman light, Tower light, face light.  
I am nothing but what you see.  
In fact you give it to me.

3 November 1994

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Beyond the broken city came the place of regard  
the overgrown bower where believers  
crow their liturgies against this simple hand  
that almost wants to touch you silently

like Spain or a swallow. They come.  
It is above us always, western river,  
gravel garden, the calcium of my confusions  
thick over any quiet cup.

Almost wants you. Almost, to be a bridge  
between two meanings, cherries, your lives  
for thousands of years unfolding  
like naked wives in an idle seraglio,

all of these are you. A cushion. A glass.  
A city I flew over one time, the Rhine,  
trucks that pick up fat and offal from  
thrifty butchershops. The rendering

of all things into a translucent confusion,  
add ashes, live forever. Help me be clean.  
The radiator is arguing like two merchants  
at war in the marketplace in Thonon,

I heard them. One of them has killed his own horse.  
The other is a secret donor to Catholic  
causes. The listless customers of our day  
refuse to take sides. I touch you. A lake.

3 November 1994, Hopson

## AFTER HOURS

Someone whistling in the building.  
Someone moving on the dark stairs.  
In the forgotten showers someone's standing  
dry, dry, whistling like the moon.

3 November 1994, Hopson

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Give him the mother tincture  
since that is music

root animal seed animal  
tuber in the glebe lights  
when you look for it

look for me I am hidden in your clothes  
this prong of me so many times divided

to taste the whole city rail by stone  
and then the next day

and learn Portuguese and sift  
the sand out with my fine teeth

desire! How could there be less than ocean?

Tilers fall from the sky, sinister churches  
openly gape. "I take this drug  
because the world is not yet ready for my power,"

it is a matter  
of walking down the street  
so no one finds you  
and you find everything

that is heart huddle and a broken spoon.

Find a puddle in a gutter, sit in it  
and make a sound that in another language  
(which?) means I have come home.

4 November 1994

## MONET

Monet found it resting in the shade  
or more exactly as the shade beneath  
the chair she sat on this side the roses.

This same dark light he found in Normandy  
little village where the rain comes close  
and solves stone houses. No one walks.

No one is waiting in the shade.  
She sews her child's white clothes  
all the time in the world.

5 November 1994, Boston

## THE CRAFT

Is it discipline?  
Or a secret inside?  
They used to call a whip that

that almost made the body  
into a mind, made the skin think  
rivulets of blood

to satisfy the dark exchanges of the soul  
or so I read in books, I who squeal  
at the dentist's touch

like a door squeaking open.  
Noises in the cellar  
where no one is supposed to be.

6 November 1994  
Boston

## ANOTHER PART OF TOWN

1.

Land us where we fell — an incident  
from another world, all right, the harriers  
(who are they?) come down  
and the kids in the neighborhood  
dissolve into curious patterns of scatter—  
Serengeti style. A herd is happening.

2.

Wait for the clapper at the door.  
The leper remembers to come calling,  
and tocks the dismal knocker at his belt  
until you think the wall is coming.  
And there he is, more alive than you  
by virtue of his sickness, full of impact  
mocking healthy insipid ordinary you.

3.

Too much entertainment  
uproots the lilac at the doorsill. The bus  
drops you in an unknown neighborhood.  
At one corner you get a glimpse of open space  
blocks and blocks away up the boulevard.  
Here big hospitals are looming, pale  
plastery vastnesses with helicopter pads on top.  
Briefly you think about nurses, corridors,  
machines that attach themselves to men.

Why have we come to this, you think.  
Why has it come to this, a city inescapable,  
buildings too big for the sky.

Where did you  
think you were going way back then



(when was it?) you first began to go?  
The bus was waiting and you went.

4.

In different colors (which are dialects of light)  
the things arrange themselves. You have always known  
that colors are the keys to the whole—  
easel painting and the scientific age are  
born at the same time, mean the same inquiring,  
“this art is all about color.” Color  
is analysis. Color is what things say.

There is enough light left to hear them.  
You walk, an act of politeness to the landscape.  
There have been so many busses in your life,  
so many avenues. The bus stops are the only  
measures. They meet you like years, like years.

5.

Where do you want to be tonight? That  
is what the sky is always asking.  
I have to brush low branches away to see.  
Ginkgo, plane trees, shake them,  
to see the sky that asks me,  
nervous little trees of city avenues,  
hospitals and bus stops and where  
do I want to sleep tonight?

The sky's a page all ink and no white space,  
all the words are written down at once,  
and where can anybody sleep tonight?

7 NOVEMBER 1994

**8 : 2 3**

8:23 it said it never said before  
my first first moment at this minute  
I who measure everything and this

Not the conventional meter  
or the tin stick at Arts et Métiers  
I ask a liquid measure

all gills and parasangs and wings.

8 November 1994

## LANDSCAPE

If big is scary, that's why hospitals are big.  
Why do they have to make them fat as the Kremlin,  
trampling the sky? They cliff over us,  
terrifying torture houses. Against the skyline  
the sneering silhouettes of hospitals.

8 November 1994

## TWILIGHT

Clouds must be causing the same imperfections we admire  
so in Persian carpets as they used to be called, back  
when all those Cheever people went down to Watertown  
to pick them out in airy warehouses, usually on their weay  
back home from the Cape — a family gets tired of bare  
sea-washed wooden walls and floors agleam with wax and sand,  
Some color in the house for winter, russets and madders,  
indigos like the creases in your lap when you've been working  
too many hours on the stupid income tax. These Democrats.  
Art is a prayed-for accident, long prepared by work and grace  
and then it happens when you least attend. So they say,  
those tired men in college lecture halls who seem to know all  
about it but never do it, like priests authorities on weird sins.  
So sunset makes all things strange, unreliable and beautiful.

8 November 1994

